Expansion of air services in Kerala

1505. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala has become a well accepted tourist destination for domestic as well as foreign tourists;

(b) if so, whether there are adequate flights to cater to the needs of both domestic and foreign tourists;

(c) whether the State Government of Kerala have requested for increasing the number of flights in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. Kerala is very well connected with various destinations, both domestic and foreign. Besides Indian carriers like Air India, Air India Express, Indian Airlines, Jet Airways, Sahara Airlines, Air Deccan, Kingfisher Airlines, Go Air and Paramount Airways, foreign carriers like Gulf Air, Emirates, Kuwait Airlines, Oman Air, Qatar Airways, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Mahan Air, Silk Air and Sri Lankan Air are also operating to/from Kerala.

(c) Yes, Sir. References have been received from Chief Minister of Kerala, Hon'ble Members of Parliament and Pune Malayalee Federation on the issue.

(d) Indian Airlines has plans to increase its operations to/from Kerala subject to availabilityof resources with the airline and commercial viability of such operations. Further, traffic rights to foreign countries on Kerala routes has been considerably enhanced in recent times.

Private operators in international routes

1506. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATON be pleased to state:

(a) whether any criteria has been relaxed for private-operators to fly to international routes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?